

DMSO cream (50%) for Complex Regional Pain Syndrome

Your doctor has prescribed *Dimethyl-Sulfoxide* (DMSO) cream to alleviate pain, hypersensitivity and swelling. DMSO has local pain - and inflammation-relieving effects, among others. In addition, the gentle rubbing while applying is also likely to help.

DMSO has been used in medicine since more than 50 years for various problems. Like quite a few other substances used for long-term pain relief, it is not formally licensed for CRPS treatment in the UK, so the manufacturer won't take any responsibility for serious side effects or harm.

Why has it been recommended nonetheless?

CRPS symptoms are often difficult to relieve and there aren't many effective treatment options available. Research shows that quite a few patients find DMSO quite helpful, and the side effects are minor and rare.

How to use it

We recommend a trial of ca. 3 months during which it should be applied on a regular basis, as the full effect may take quite a while to become apparent. During this trial you should apply it five times every day over the most painful/sensitive area, gently rubbing it into the skin.

Side effects

Like all medicines, DMSO can have side effects. Compared to other treatments for CRPS these are mild and rare. Containing sulfur, DMSO cream has a garlic-like smell. Being absorbed into your body, your breath and body will likely smell a little like this and you may have a taste of garlic during the treatment.

Sometimes, there are skin reactions like burning, itching, rash or dry skin. It can be helpful to minimize this by applying good skin care/moisturizing cream between DMSO applications to keep the skin supple and intact. If skin problems are severe, persist or have a trend to worsen despite good skin care you should stop using DMSO cream.

DMSO enables other local substances to be absorbed more easily through skin, so it is a good idea to avoid exposing the treated area to other chemical substances, dirt etc. You also should not apply other local medicines such as skin patches or other medical creams directly on the treated area while using DMSO cream.

Other uncommon or rare side effects include dizziness, headaches, drowsiness, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, breathing problems, vision problems, allergic reactions and light sensitivity. As above, we recommend to follow common sense – if the side effect are mild try to persist for a bit longer as they can get less or disappear altogether after a while. If on the other hand the side effects are severe, persisting or worsening discontinue the treatment.

If you take other long-term medicines for serious medical conditions (e.g. insulin for diabetes, Warfarin for clotting problems) starting DMSO treatment can change the effect, so it is

recommended to do checks during the first two weeks at your GP or treating specialist , e.g. blood sugar, INR.

When not to take DMSO cream

While there no specific contraindications, DMSO is cautioned or not recommended if you suffer with severe kidney or liver disease or a combination of both. If you suffer with widespread skin problems e.g. eczema, risk and benefits should be considered with your doctor. As there is no information available about it's safety DMSO should not be used during pregnancy.

Recording your response

It is quite important for you personally, and also for general use, to record your response to DMSO treatment. You can use the tables below to record benefit and side effects.

PLEASE TAKE THE COMPLETED LEAFLET WITH YOU TO EACH OF YOUR REVIEW APPOINTMENTS AS WE CAREFULLY NEED TO MONITOR OUTCOMES AND SIDE EFFECTS!

Benefit

Intensity score (Between 0 = none and 10 = maximum)	Pain (0-10)	Hypersensitivity (0-10)	Swelling (0-10)	Movement restriction (0 full movement – 10 hardly any movement)
Before starting DMSO				
Average after week 1				
Average after week 2				
Average after week 3				
Average after week 4				
Average after 2 months				
Average after 3 months				

Side effects

Side effects and weeks of treatment	Severity (1 very mild to 10 extremely severe)

I had to stop treatment due to above side effects – Y/ N (please circle one)

I would use DMSO cream again if needed – Y / N (please circle one)

I would recommend this treatment to others - Y / N (please circle one)